

T-O-P S-E-C-R-E-T
OXCART

BYE# 44009-66

4 October 1966

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Certain Political Aspects of OXCART Project

I. General

1. In general, we believe that most governments would not prove receptive to US proposals that they cooperate in a program of Oxcart flights -- particularly since we assume that they would be told, or in any case suspect, that such flights would be targetted against the USSR. In the case of certain close US allies, those in the governments who are most concerned with intelligence and military strategy would no doubt press their political superiors to cooperate; and some of the latter might sympathize with the objectives of the effort. However, except as noted below, we believe that the political chiefs would prefer that their countries not be involved and, in effect, would hope that the US would either decide not to conduct the program, or would make arrangements for carrying it out which did not include them. Certain governments might be somewhat more receptive to

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granting overflight rights, or cooperating in refueling arrangements than they would be if asked to permit staging or recovery on their territories. However, almost none would be enthusiastic about any form of association with the program, and actual agreement would depend on cases, as discussed below.

2. Some friendly governments would strongly question the need or desirability of these flights in principle -- having in mind the heightened East-West tensions resulting from the U-2 crisis of 1960, and the subsequent public undertakings by President Eisenhower and President Kennedy that overflights of the USSR would not be resumed. Any government which the US approached would reflect upon the strong Soviet reactions to the U-2 overflight of May 1960. These governments would remember the extraordinarily harsh tone of Khrushchev's remonstrances to all of the states with which the Soviets knew that the US had arrangements in support of U-2 operations. They would probably estimate that the Soviet reactions would be even harsher this time. They would also take account of the commonly known fact that the US is using satellite reconnaissance -- which would seem to them to do the job with few of the risks.

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3. Beyond these considerations, there is a widespread belief -- much more evident and pervasive than in the '50s or early '60s -- that the danger of the Soviets initiating war is small; in the minds of many governments, including those in NATO, this belief not only argues against the urgency of increasing intelligence coverage on the USSR, but also fortifies their inclination not to risk reviving greater East-West tensions -- especially since they are already worried over the effects of Vietnam on US-Soviet relations. Some friendly governments would feel more strongly on these matters than would others, and there are of course important differences between them in terms of their own freedom of action (e.g., in terms of political accountability in case something went wrong or the matter became public, the importance and orientation of public opinion, numbers of people to be consulted, and the like).

II. Staging and Recovery

4. We believe that the UK and Sweden -- or for that matter any of the governments of Western Europe -- would for political reasons reject a US proposal to stage or recover Oxcart on their

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territories. We would conclude the same with respect to the Japanese government's attitude about the use of the Okinawa base. (Although Kadena is a US base, we assume that the Japanese would in practice learn of its use for these purposes, whether or not they were consulted in advance.) All these states would have to cope with political accountability and possible repercussions in terms of public opinion which would make them unwilling for domestic reasons alone; and all of them are anxious to avoid any worsening of East-West tensions generally, or of their own respective relations with the USSR.

5. Turkey, and especially Thailand represent somewhat different cases, in that they are more directly dependant on US support and more susceptible to US influence in matters of this sort. But recent trends in Turkey have been in the direction of greater resistance to granting special rights to the US, and

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opposition parties in Turkey have been pressing the government fairly hard in these respects in the last two years or so, and these pressures would make the government very sensitive about undertaking any new arrangements with the US. In addition, the

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friendlier Soviet posture toward Turkey which has been evident for the last two years or so would add to Turkey's reluctance. On balance, we conclude that Turkey would almost certainly not grant staging or recovery rights.

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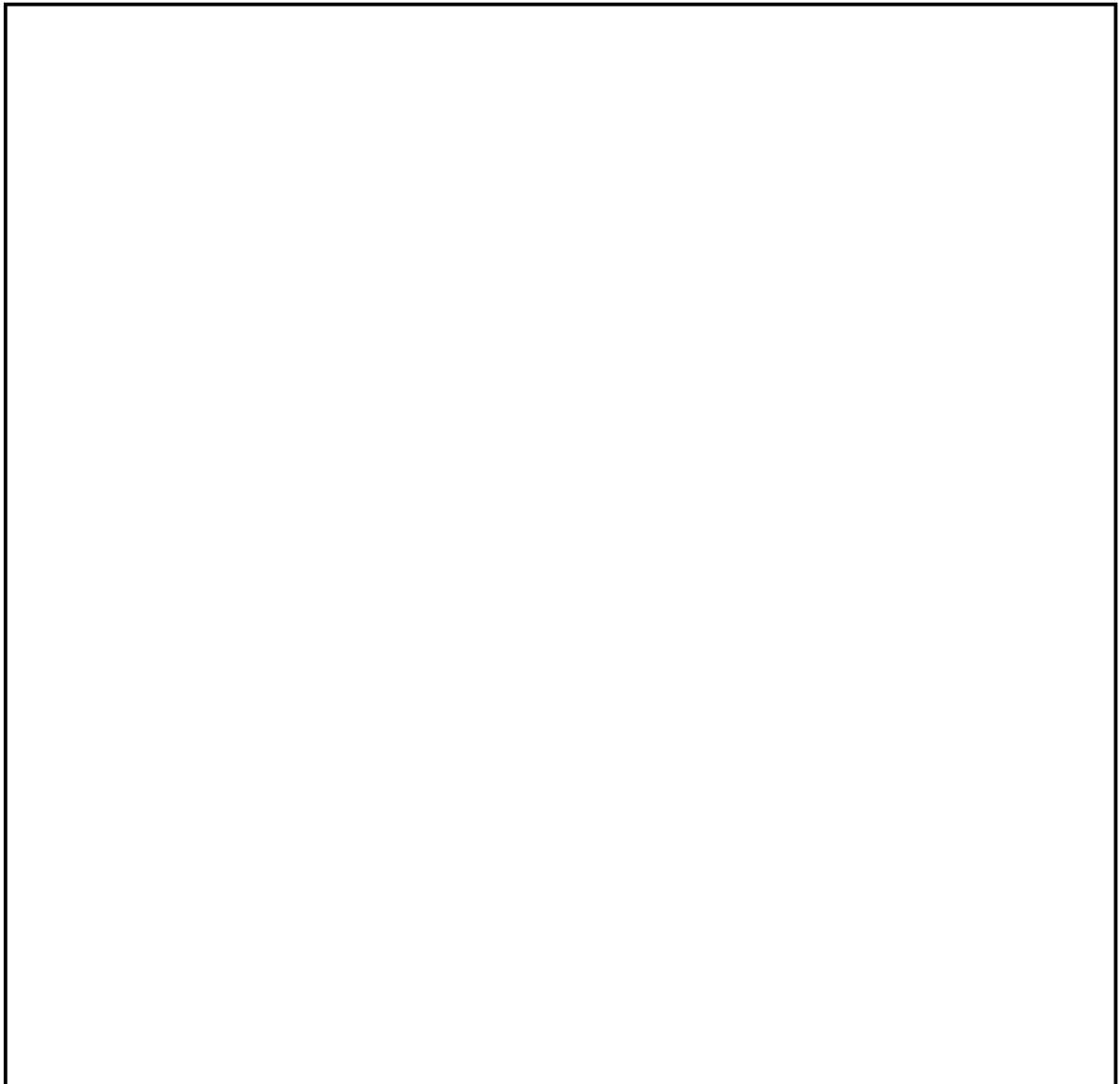
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III. Aerial Refueling and Transit Rights

9. Generally speaking, most friendly governments would also be reluctant to enter into agreements for transit rights or even

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aerial refueling -- for the same reasons discussed above; they would doubt that the program was worth the risk, and would in any case want the US to make arrangements not involving them. But obviously arrangements for refueling or transit permission would be easier for some governments to contemplate, since they involve little or nothing that is visible and tangible on the ground, and less would have to be said or acknowledged about the purpose of the flights.

10. Even so, many friendly governments would not consent to cooperate even in these limited ways. We believe that both India and Pakistan would find a proposal for aerial refueling or even overflights unacceptable both for domestic reasons and because they have every incentive to avoid trouble in their relations with the USSR.

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Avoidance of antagonism with the Soviet Union is important to the Pakistanis and a central tenet of Indian

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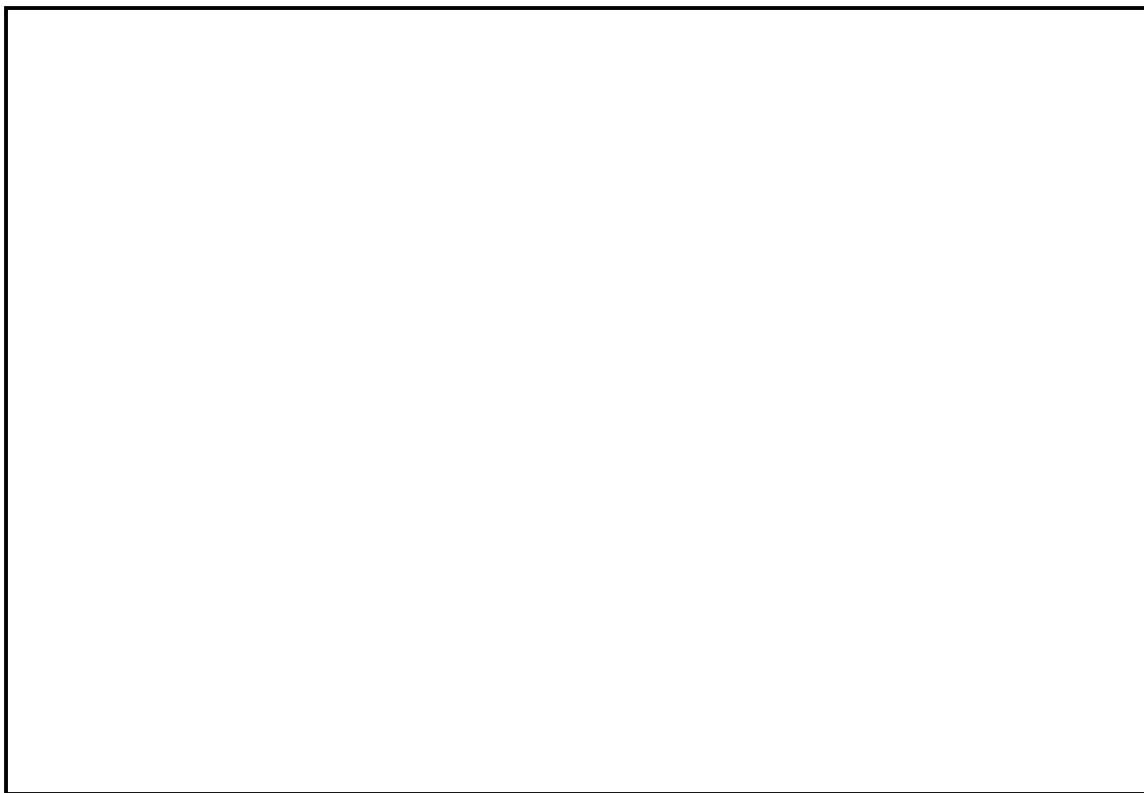
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foreign policy. In neither case do we believe that any quid pro quo offer from the US would serve to change their minds.

11. Certain other states might prove more willing to enter into refueling rights arrangements or (more particularly) to countenance overflights of their territories. In all cases, however, we believe that actual agreement would require some price. Chances



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